Amendment 2/Ex-civil rights official testifies

From A1

explained, of the oppression faced by gays — Schleder answered a series of questions about the boycott.

"Any effort our group has contributed to the boycott of Amendment 2 is born out of chaos, not political power, and out of desperation," Schleder told the court. "The organizers of this boycott are a small group of people who've done superhuman things on very little resources and money."

Jack Wysoky of the attorney general's office asked her to read and comment on a letter to her organization from Gov. Roy Romer.

"Would it be fair to say Governor Romer's letter was an expression of sympathy to the opposition of Amendment 2?" he asked. Had Schleder answered yes, that might be an indication gays have the ear of important politicians.

But Schleder sighed and shook her head. "No," she replied. "I wouldn't call it an expression of sympathy. I would call it a recognition on the behalf of the governor that he has tried to find a common ground. I believe he uses those words."

Under cross-examination by plaintiffs attorney Greg Eurich, Schleder discussed the group's makeshift existence — and timely luck. She testified that the boycott was actually under way before the group had even organized. In fact, she said, singer Barbra Streisand announced her support of the boycott coincidentally the morning the group had scheduled its first news conference.

"We had no idea it was going to happen," said Schleder. "We were, like, wow, this is great."

Eurich asked whether the group had an office, equipment and secretary. Schleder, and a handful of supporters in the gallery, burst into laughter.

So far, Schleder said, the group has raised about $8,000 in donations.

"In 11 months?" said Eurich.

"We've gotten $1 checks," she said. "We've gotten a lot of them. We got a $1,000 check last week. I cried."

Not only did Schleder decline to take credit for the flurry of organizations that have canceled conventions and appointments in the state, she said her group has had trouble keeping track of them.

"A lot of these people don't even know about our organization, and it really kind of ticks us off," she said.

In other testimony, a constitutional law professor contended that Amendment 2 protects the rights of religious freedom and free association. And a former chairman of the Colorado Civil Rights Commission said that the amendment protects the integrity of current civil rights laws. With both, state attorneys were trying to demonstrate a "compelling interest" for the amendment — a high legal standard they have to meet to protect the law.

Gay rights "would weaken and dilute those protections that have been won by minorities and the disabled over the years," said Ignacio Rodriguez, who served on the Colorado Civil Rights Commission for eight years. "It would lower the esteem which the general public holds for civil rights laws."

Rodriguez said he does not believe gays as a group have suffered historical discrimination.

"I'm a bit older than most everyone in this courtroom," he said. "I remember the signs that said 'No dogs or Mexicans' in all the restaurants. I remember not being able to go to the public swimming pool. My dad made $9 a week, and so a $2 poll tax was taking food off the table. I don't see those kind of things with gays and lesbians."

WHAT'S NEXT

The state will call two more experts today before resting its case. Then opposing attorneys are expected to call four more witnesses in rebuttal.

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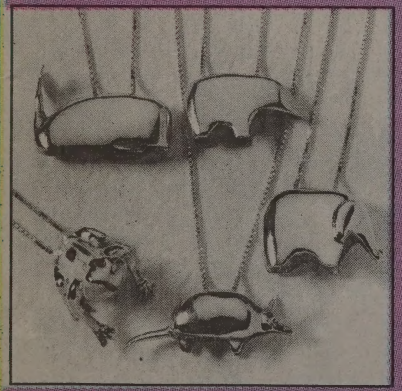

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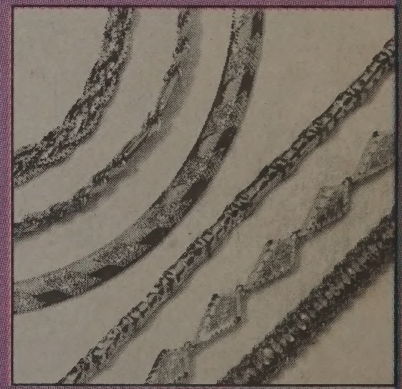

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STATE

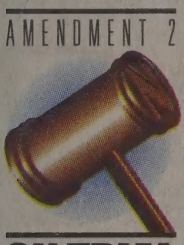
Defense tries to show gays have clout

Strength of boycott debated

By **Angela Dire**
Gazette Telegraph

DENVER — Were the people who organized the post-Amendment 2 boycott of Colorado politically savvy and connected? Or were they novices who operated on a shoestring?

Those questions were at the heart of testimony Tuesday in the sixth day of the trial to determine whether Amendment 2 is constitutional.



Amendment 2, which would ban laws that protect gays from discrimination based on their sexual orientation, is on hold until District Judge Jeffrey Bayless rules on its constitutionality. In the meantime, city officials and boycott backers estimate the shun-Colorado campaign has cost the state at least $81 million in lost business, although a precise figure is impossible to come by.

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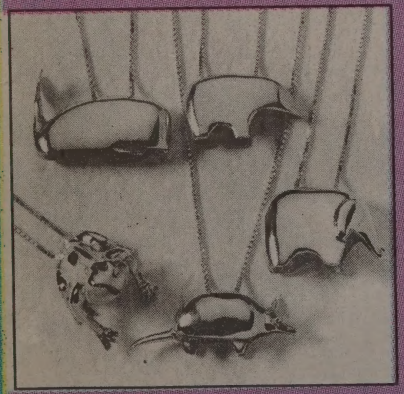

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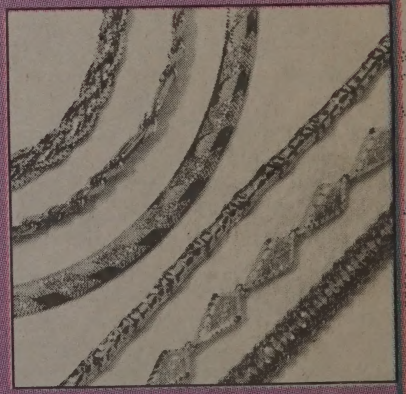

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In a bit of a turnabout, state attorneys defending the measure called Terry Schleder, president of Boycott Colorado Inc., to the stand to demonstrate the political success of the movement. Attorneys challenging the law sought to portray members of the group basically as novices in the right place at the right time.

It all goes to a key point in this trial: whether gays as a group lack political power. That is one factor courts use to decide whether they ought to step in and protect a group that has been treated unfairly.

Plaintiffs argue that, besides overturning Amendment 2, the courts should decide once and for all that government may not treat people differently because of their sexual orientation. The state contends that gays don't need the courts' protection because they make up a "powerful special interest group" that, among other things, succeeded in orchestrating a multimillion-dollar boycott over Amendment 2.

Wearing a black chain fashioned out of construction paper — a symbol, she

See **AMENDMENT 2**/A3

HIGHLIGHTS

State attorneys attempted to prove that gays wield tremendous power by calling to the stand Terry Schleder, president of Boycott Colorado Inc. The state contends that gays don't need the courts' protection because they comprise a "powerful special interest group" that, among other things, succeeded in orchestrating the boycott.

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two became ill./**A5**

▶ **NEWS FROM THE DIET FRON** in Milwaukee have found one natu that triggers craving for fatty food a that blocks the desire./**A9**

WORLD

▶ **PROTESTERS BEATEN:** A pe standoff in India at Kashmir's holie seemed distant Tuesday as police wooden clubs over the heads and demonstrators and kicked them a ground in defiant protest./**A10**

OPINION

▶ **SCHOOL CHOICE:** There ha Republican politicians westward icant battle of the year — Califo tion to allow school vouchers, wr Robert D. Novak./**A13**

BUSINESS

▶ **NO SAVINGS FROM MANA** gressional report released Tuesd dence that employers save mon health-care systems that are an President Clinton's health plan./

▶ **GAMING INDUSTRY CHANG** competition may signal the end t limit on casino wagers, observers predict./**A14**

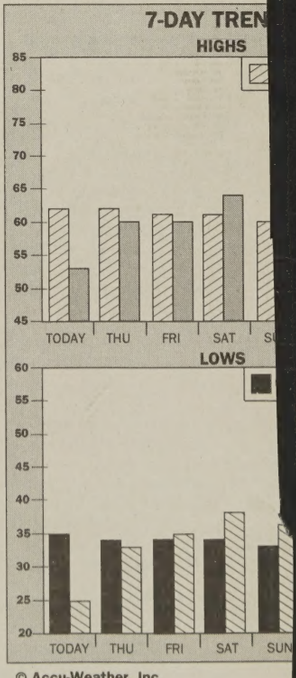
CITY/REGION

▶ **UTILITIES DIRECTOR WANT** Water rates would go up nearly 3 electric rates 4.3 percent next ye Springs Utilities is granted a rate construction projects./**B1**

▶ **DEPUTIES IN STANDOFF:** A Paso County sheriff's deputies at an hour with a .357-caliber Magn apparently wanted to commit sui by authorities./**B2**

LOCAL FORECAST

Today: Mostly sunny and cool. Hig
Tonight: Starlit, calm and cold. Lo
Thursday: Sunshine and becoming High 60, low 33.
Friday: Mostly sunny, near season High 60, low 35.
Saturday: Plenty of sunshine and r High 64, low 38.
Sunday: Sunny to partly cloudy and High 66, low 36.



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TODAY'S RECORDS

HIGH ..... 78° (1878) **LOW**

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COLORADO FORECA

CENTRAL MOUNTAINS: Sunny to partly cloudy Highs 36-59. Clear and cold tonight. Lows 12-2 and pleasant Thursday.
FRONT RANGE: Mostly sunny, but cool today. Clear and cold tonight. Lows 25-30. Thursday, and becoming milder.
WESTERN SLOPE: Sunshine and a few clouds 55-64. Clear tonight. Lows